

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE VISION 2020 COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Tom Sloan at 9:00 am on Monday, February 23, 2015, 218-N of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Scott Abbott, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Iraida Orr, Legislative Research Department
Natalie Teemer-Washington, Legislative Research Department
Mary Koles, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant
Renae Jefferies, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Ed Martinko, Director, Kansas Biological Survey, University of Kansas
Jerry deNoyelles, Deputy Director, Kansas Biological Society, University of Kansas
Rex Buchanan, Interim Director, Kansas Geological Survey, University of Kansas

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Presentation on:

Ed Martinko, Director, Kansas Biological Survey, University of Kansas, reviewed information gleaned over the last decade regarding the health of Kansas' twenty-four federal reservoirs. They have been accumulating sediment and decreasing in volume since they were constructed. Long-term bathymetric mapping events monitor the reservoirs' decline in volume and long-term sediment coring projects monitor the ever increasing thickness of sediment. Martinko referenced several graphs depicting the current level of infilling and projected level of infilling by the end of the century; eleven reservoirs will have lost more than 50% of their original capacity by 2104.

Martinko remarked that reservoirs are a priority but their management must also be a priority. We need to continue monitoring the rate and amount sedimentation and determine the causes of infilling, not only the symptoms. ([Attachment 1](#)) In closing, he mentioned the Kansas Lakes and Reservoirs Data Portal noting that it is an excellent source of various water related data.

Presentation on:

Jerry deNoyelles, Deputy Director, Kansas Biological Survey, University of Kansas, addressed Kansas reservoirs, a vanishing resource that from the smallest to the largest need attention. He noted that around 200,000 ponds are on private land and they need help; more than 130,000 are larger than 1/4 acre, all are filling with sediment. The twenty-four federal reservoirs have three times the water volume as all of Kansas' other impoundments. He described differences between natural lakes and reservoirs as related to infilling and plant growth. The latter are, he said, always challenged by unstable biota.

He discussed managing and restoring reservoirs, the ability to determine what action will/should work

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for a particular type of reservoir and the pros and cons of potential solutions. Dredging is expensive, most federal reservoirs have thousands of miles of channels which translates to stream bank erosion and ultimately requires restorative work. Flushing and other actions might work. The single best action right now for surface water and ground water, he observed, is to use less.

It is imperative, deNoyelles said, to recognize what can be maintained and what cannot and to set priorities for taking action. Then decide what kinds of actions to implement and where they will be most effective. Managing the causes of infilling, he said, will be the most effective action and continued monitoring of management effectiveness will be necessary. He commented favorably on the Governor's request for a vision for the future of water supply in Kansas. His recommendation: vision to action. He concluded with the following thoughts:

- *"where there is no vision, there is no hope" - George Washington Carver*
- *"leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality" - Warren G. Bennis ([Attachment 1](#))*

Following his remarks, Chairman Sloan and Representatives O'Brien, Campbell, Houston, and Francis asked questions and engaged in conversation.

Presentation on:

Rex Buchanan, Interim Director, Kansas Geological Survey (KGS), University of Kansas, introduced Jim Butler, head of the KGS Geohydrology Section, who accompanied him to today's meeting. Buchanan explained that the KGS's mission is to study and report on the state's geologic resources and hazards. The primary focus is on energy and water issues. They work with the Department of Agriculture to measure groundwater levels in central and western Kansas every January and to provide current conditions and long-term trends. They also collect and distribute logs from water wells drilled in the state.

Buchanan stated KGS's first priority is the High Plains aquifer which includes the Ogallala. High Plains supplies 70% to 80% of the water used by Kansans every day. Large-volume pumping from this aquifer has led to declining water levels in the western portions of the region and the area faces critical water related issues. He mentioned a public information circular about the aquifer and its current status is attached to his testimony. Specific priorities regarding the High Plains aquifer include:

- continue the Ogallala-High Plains Aquifer Assessment Program
- continue and expand the Index Well Program
- continue aquifer modeling studies in each Groundwater Management District

KGS's second priority is the Kansas River alluvial aquifer. This corridor is projected to be a major area of population and economic growth in future decades. More information is needed to better understand and best manage this aquifer. To this end the KGS proposes the following activities:

- develop an Observation Well Network in the Kansas River Alluvial Aquifer - similar to the

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index-well network in High Plains

- develop a Groundwater Model of the Kansas River Alluvial Aquifer - extend from upstream of Manhattan to the junction with the Missouri River

This priority while not reflected in the current state water plan was identified during the current water-vision planning process as a priority for northeastern Kansas. Buchanan emphasized that both High Plains aquifer studies and Kansas River alluvial aquifer studies should be a high priority and will provide important information for managing these water resources for decades. ([Attachment 2](#)) Following his remarks, questions were asked by Chairman Sloan and Representatives Francis, Bollier, and Swanson. Also, comments surfaced and Jim Butler fielded a question. Chairman Sloan thanked today's participants for their presentations.

The meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

The next meeting will be February 25, 2015.